

Summary of Public Comments on Regulatory Amendment 14 September 2013

One hundred thirty-four written comments were received during the comment period (July 22 to August 18). One hundred twenty-two were postcards suggesting the following:

- Align the opening of vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish and institute a split commercial season for gray triggerfish.
- Establish a 1,000-pound trip limit for both vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish with a trip-limit step-down to 200 pounds once 75% of the ACLs have been landed.
- Establish a 200-pound trip-limit step-down for gag after 75% of the commercial ACL has been landed. In addition, utilize the amount currently being deducted from the commercial ACL to account for post-quota bycatch mortality of gag to implement a 50-pound bycatch allowance for this species.
- Align the opening of the black sea bass commercial fishing year with that of shallow-water groupers (May 1) and implement a 200-pound trip limit when 75% of the ACL is met or is projected to be met.

COMMENTS NOT SPECIFIC TO THE ACTIONS IN THE AMENDMENT:

- In general, the public was very supportive of lining up the opening of fishing seasons for snapper grouper species in order to minimize regulatory discards.
- Instituting full-retention and moving away from size limits to eliminate discard mortality was frequently mentioned.
- Several fishermen in Georgia and NE Florida stated that the recently approved trip limit reduction for vermilion snapper would impact them negatively.
- Fishermen expressed support for enhancing habitat by creating more artificial reefs.
- Georgia fishermen stated that the current black sea bass allocation should be revised as there are no commercial fishermen who hold black sea bass pot endorsements in Georgia yet the commercial quota is almost half of the total ACL. Fishermen also requested that the Council consider an increase to the recreational bag limit to 10 fish and full retention of snapper grouper species to eliminate discard mortality.
- The Council should consider an increase to the vermilion snapper bag limit since the ACL was recently increased substantially.
- The Council should revisit the Jacks Management Unit and look into increasing the ACL for almaco jacks.

- The Council should consider giving fish back to the fishermen when the ACLs are not met, especially for species that are not overfished or undergoing overfishing.
- The Council should consider the same fishing year for both sectors for black sea bass.
- The current recreational size limit for black sea bass is 13 inches whereas the commercial is 11 inches. The Council should consider making the same size limit requirement for both sectors. The 13-inch size limit results in high grading. Also, many of the 11-inch fish caught in pots are males indicating that transition from females to males may be occurring earlier. Fishermen are concerned this is happening because the larger males, the 13-inch fish and larger, are being removed from the population.

ACTION 1 – GREATER AMBERJACK

- Fishermen were supportive of changing the commercial and recreational fishing years for greater amberjack to the calendar year.
- Fishermen repeatedly inquired whether the spawning season restrictions would be held in place because they felt they were important.
- Recommendation to prohibit fishing in May.

ACTIONS 2 & 3 – BLACK SEA BASS (RECREATIONAL)

- While fishermen supported changing the black sea bass recreational fishing year to begin on April 1, there was also support for starting the fishing year on May 1 to coincide with the opening of shallow water groupers. Fishermen in Georgia also supported a March 1 start date.
- There was generally little support among fishermen for establishing a fixed recreational season for black sea bass as proposed in Alternatives 2 and 3 under Action 3. Some for-hire fishermen were in favor, however. Most fishermen expressed support for Alternative 4.

ACTION 4 – BLACK SEA BASS (COMMERCIAL)

- Most fishermen supported the changes to the commercial fishing year for black sea bass under Alternative 3. This alternative would implement a trip limit for the hook-and-line sector from January 1 until the opening of pot season on May 1. The trip limit thereafter would be 1,000 pounds for both pots and hook-and-line gear. Most fishermen supported a hook-and-line trip limit of 300 pounds.
- One comment stated that May is an important month for spawning based on recent scientific research. And, due to the increase in the ACL, hook and line fishermen should have a lot of fish left to harvest after the closure for pots. Therefore, the Council should consider Alternative 1 (No Action) at this time and see how the increase in the ACL affects the fishery before considering modifying to the commercial fishing year.

ACTION 5 – VERMILION SNAPPER (COMMERCIAL)

- Most fishermen were supportive of taking no action to change the commercial split seasons for vermillion snapper.

ACTION 6 – GAG (COMMERCIAL)

- Fishermen supported the trip-limit step down proposed in Action 6. Some fishermen supported a 300-pound trip limit.

ACTION 7 – VERMILION SNAPPER (RECREATIONAL)

- The public was generally supportive of the Council's preferred.

Regulatory Amendment 14 Public Comment

Please align opening dates for co-occurring species and manage quotas so everything is legal as we target fish with higher limits.

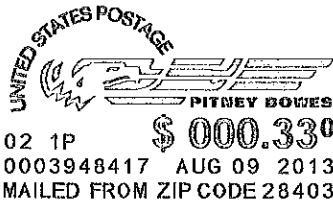
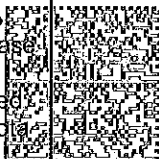


Quotas in a multi-species fishery should be managed with possession limits that step down as landings increase to avoid long closures that currently result in well over a million pounds of dead discards annually.

Please split the Triggerfish quota into two seasons that open with Vermilion Snapper and put a 1,000 pound possession limit in place with a 200 pound limit after 75% of each seasonal quota is landed. Please reduce the Gag Grouper limit to 200 pounds after 75% of the quota is landed and use the 27,218 pounds of gag quota that was recently allocated to dead discards for a 50 pound by-catch allowance after the primary quota is filled. Other species with extended closures should also be managed this way to avoid total closures. Please open Black Sea Bass with shallow water grouper and reduce the possession limit to 200 pounds after 75% of the quota has been landed. Thank you for considering these solutions.

Christen Jones

Joshua Jones



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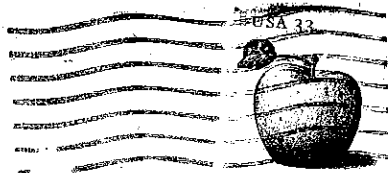
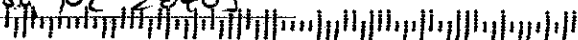
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DANIEL HUGGINS

Daniel Huggins

5624 OLIVIER DR #100

WILMINGTON, NC 28403



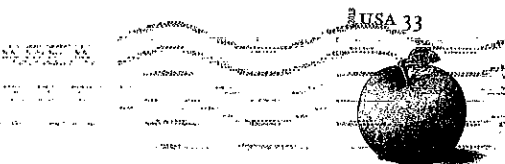
Bob Mahood, Executive Director
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[Signature]



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Chris Haller
Chris Haller



USA 33



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Bryson Campbell
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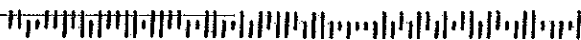


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JAYNE T. KEELS

Jayne Keels



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Joe Thomas

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Mona Faye Black



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Helenz McCabe

Please leave the

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Tia Breydon
Joe Breydon

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Debbie Manley
302 Carrie Court
Newport, NC

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Larry Calisterio

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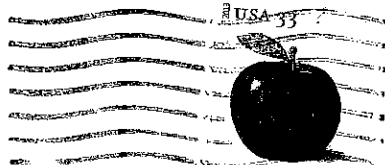
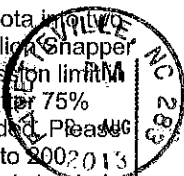
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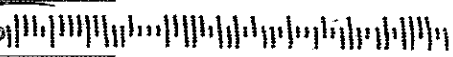
Keith Schoelen

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John Robert Johnston
John R. Johnston



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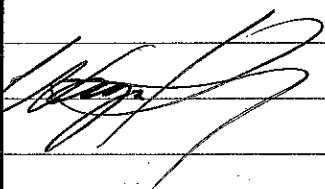
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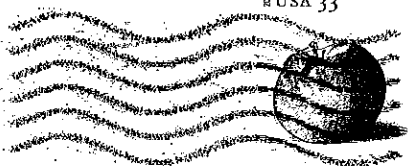
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Tony

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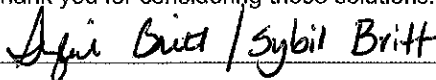


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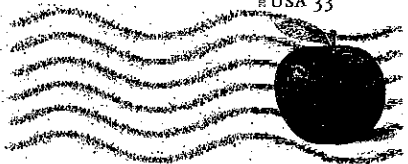


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Ben O'Neil
204 Chadwick RD
Beaufort N.C.



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ELIZABETH MOREN
Elizabeth Moren

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KC Welliver
8503 Hammock Dunes Dr
P.O. Box 100000

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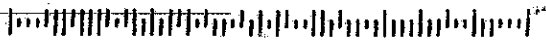
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A SIGN FROM ABOVE

5751 Oleander Ste. #4
Wilmington, NC 28403

asignfromabove.net



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Thomas Humphrey

8708 Sadler Dr

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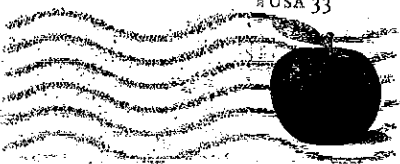
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Jennifer Clark
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Kate Hefner
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Karen Laurie
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N. Charleston, SC 29405

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Please split the Triggerfish quota into two seasons that open with Vermilion Snapper and put a 1,000 pound possession limit in place with a 200 pound limit after 75% of each seasonal quota is landed. Please reduce the Gag Grouper limit to 200 pounds after 75% of the quota is landed and use the 27,218 pounds of gag quota that was recently allocated to dead discards for a 50 pound by-catch allowance after the primary quota is filled. Other species with extended closures should also be managed this way to avoid total closures. Please open Black Sea Bass with shallow water grouper and reduce the possession limit to 200 pounds after 75% of the quota has been landed. Thank you for considering these solutions.

Tim Thomas
Tim Thomas

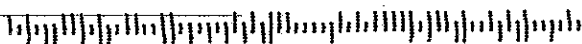
Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405

USA 33



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Claire Clemmons
10234 S. Olde Towne Wynd
Hobland, NC, 28451



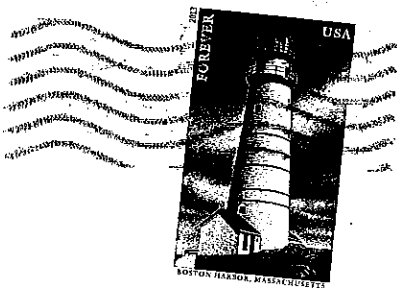
Bob Mahood, Executive Director
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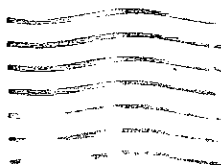
David Ray
5th generation
Masonboro Sound

Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405



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Adrian Jones



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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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Penny Morton



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INT

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Thank you for considering these solutions.

Brandi Sindle



USA 33
33 2 T
APR 10 2013 PM
Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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Scott Key

USA 33
33 2 T
APR 10 2013 PM
Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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Tiffany Miller

Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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Ashley Howard
Ashley Howard

Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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Regulatory Amendment 14 Public Comment

Please align opening dates for co-occurring species and manage quotas so everything is legal as we target fish with higher limits.



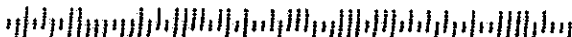
Quotas in a multi-species fishery should be managed with possession limits that step down as landings increase to avoid long closures that currently result in well over a million pounds of dead discards annually.

Please split the Triggerfish quota into two seasons that open with Vermilion Snapper and put a 1,000 pound possession limit in place with a 200 pound limit after 75% of each seasonal quota is landed. Please reduce the Gag Grouper limit to 200 pounds after 75% of the quota is landed and use the 27,218 pounds of gag quota that was recently allocated to dead discards for a 50 pound by-catch allowance after the primary quota is filled. Other species with extended closures should also be managed this way to avoid total closures. Please open Black Sea Bass with shallow water grouper and reduce the possession limit to 200 pounds after 75% of the quota has been landed. Thank you for considering these solutions.

[Handwritten signature]



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Please split the Triggerfish quota into two seasons that open in April and October and put a 1,000 pound possession limit in place with a 200 pound limit after 75% of each seasonal quota is landed. Please reduce the Gag Grouper limit to 200 pounds after 75% of the quota is landed and use the 27,218 pounds of gag quota that was recently allocated to dead discards for a 50 pound by-catch allowance after the primary quota is filled. Other species with extended closures should also be managed this way to avoid total closures. Please open Black Sea Bass with shallow water grouper and reduce the possession limit to 200 pounds after 75% of the quota has been landed. Thank you for considering these solutions.

Scott Lee

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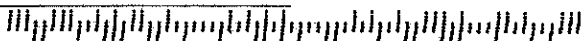
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Andrea Rogers
1231 Wild Olive Dr.
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

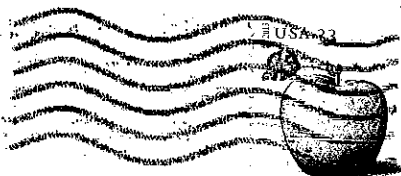
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Paul F. ...



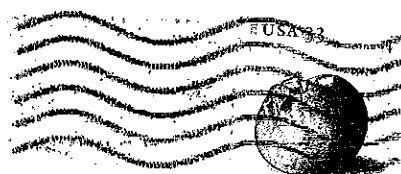
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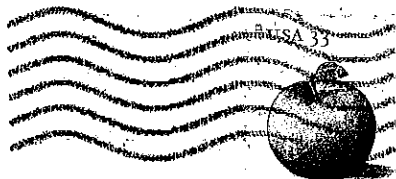
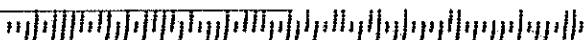
SCOTT WHITMER
SAUN LATITUDE
1202 PALM BLVD

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Jim Jim

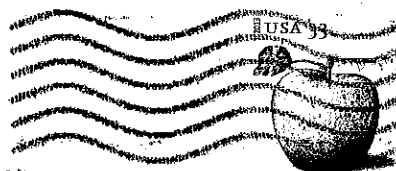


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Cam Dancy

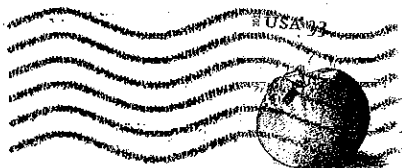
Campbell M. Dancy



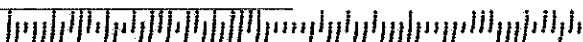
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[Signature]
 Graham Plummer



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 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
 N. Charleston, SC 29405



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[Signature]
 Stephanie Roberts
 Kayla Roberts



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 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
 N. Charleston, SC 29405

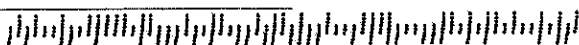
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Bob Mahood

CHARLESTON SC 294
17 AUG 2013 PM 1 T



Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405



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Jennifer Averette
Ases...

CHARLESTON SC 294
17 AUG 2013 PM 1 T

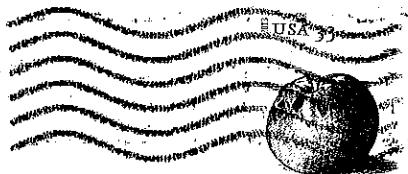


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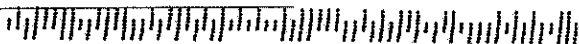
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Chandler Coogin



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Bryson Cooper

Bryson Cooper

THE BEAVER... BAD



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Richard [Signature]



USA 33
Bob Mahood, Executive Director
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*Theresa Wendle
John W...*

USA 33
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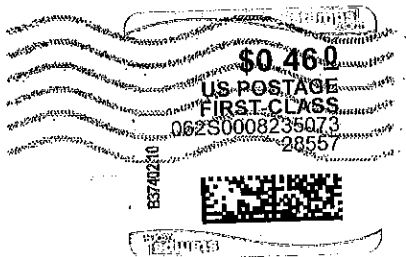
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*Closures Kills
Fishing !!*

Jeff Toms

1609 Shepard St. Mt. Pleasant

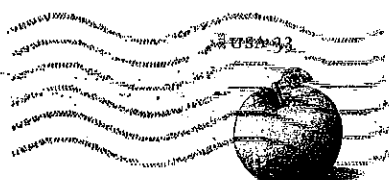
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Bob Welch

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[Handwritten signature]

Regulatory Amendment 14 Public Comment
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Nichelle Harris



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Andrew Harris

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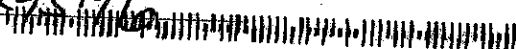
Inlet Conv & Fishing Supplies

4463 Hwy 17 P.O.

Murrells Inlet

S.C. 29546

15351



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Ernest Brunson
Kelly Crosby
Ashley Crawford

52351



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N. Charleston, SC 29405

James Thomas
JH TL

52351



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Don Haur

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DeAnna Ray
279 Rambo Lane
Andrews, SC 29510

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Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405

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Melissa Stahie

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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405

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L. Mahaley

Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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N. Charleston, SC 29405

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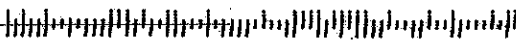
Bob Mahood, Executive Director
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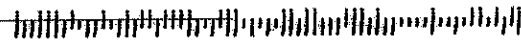


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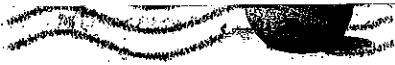
Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405

Robert Buckner
4888 Summerville
SC 29485

52351



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Kudaly Lewis

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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405

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4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
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Ben Stans

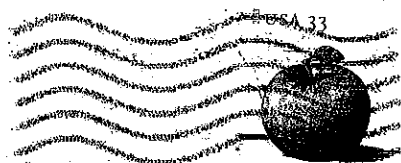
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Lorin M. Hayes
 Ronnie Bellamy

52351



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 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
 N. Charleston, SC 29405

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ALAN G. BROWN III
 79 SWANN LANE
 GEORGETOWN S.C.
 29440

52351

Bob Mahood, Executive Director
 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
 N. Charleston, SC 29405

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Kim McCabe

52351



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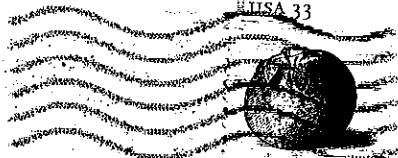
AK Bly
495 Michelle La
Johns Island, SC

2351



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ELISA 33



Bob Mahood, Executive Director
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Jon Auguet

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Kathleen Miller

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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
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James Fitch
Fischer Zedler

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Maggi Pretzlaff
Ben Pretzlaff
76-1 Resal Ln.
Lawley Rd. SC

32351

29585

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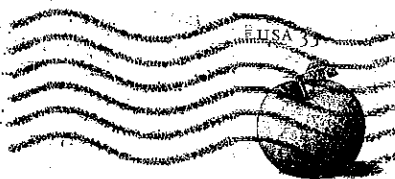
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Beverly Gabb
1303 Bon Sawyer Blvd
Mt Pleasant, SC
29404



Regulatory Amendment 14 Public Comment

Please align opening dates for co-occurring species and manage quotas so everything is legal as we target fish with higher limits.

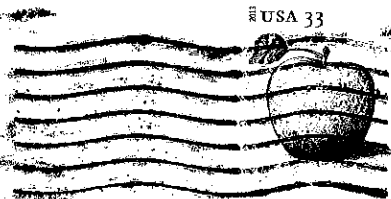
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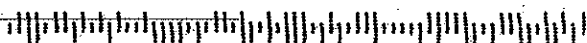
WALTER M PYLPIW

PO Box 1821

SWANSBORO, NC 28584



Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405



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Jonathan Jacobs



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Tina Whitman

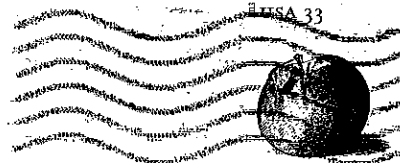


USA 33



Bob Mahood, Executive Director
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Erica L Peterson
Erica Peterson

USA 33
JAN 23 4 1 PM
Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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Sandra Beopelle
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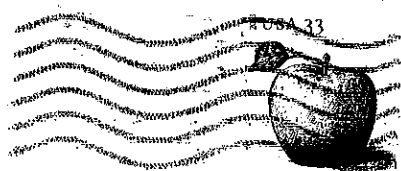
USA 33
JAN 23 4 1 PM
Bob Mahood, Executive Director
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4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405

COASTAL CAROLINA AREA
JUN 28 3 1 PM
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Corfe Dixon

USA 33



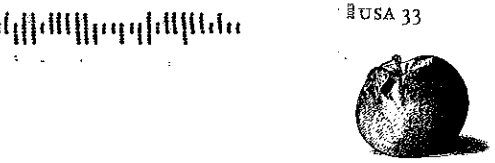
Bob Mahood, Executive Director
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Lee Mahan

USA 33



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4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
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Tail Waggin Ranch
Jimmy M. Mingo


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Bob Mahood, Executive Director
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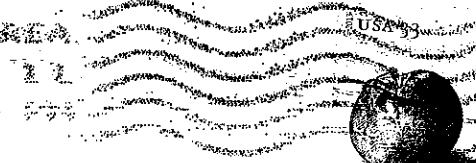
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Mary Dauberman
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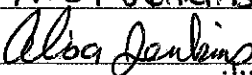
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Adam Thompson


USA 33

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Kelly Honeycutt
 Kelly Honeycutt
 Alisa Jenkins


USA 33

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MATT JONES

Matt Jones

Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405

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Don Whaley
Don Whaley
85-13

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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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Llewellyn Copeland

Tom Copeland

Sara McClain

Ronnie McClain



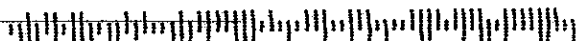
USA 33



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Briana Santrell
B. Santrell



USA 33



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Kim Ward

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N. Charleston, SC 29405

USA 33



Regulatory Amendment 14 Public Comment

Please align opening dates for co-occurring species and manage quotas so everything is legal as we target fish with higher limits.



Quotas in a multi-species fishery should be managed with possession limits that step down as landings increase to avoid long closures that currently result in well over a million pounds of dead discards annually.

Regulatory Amendment 14 Public Comment

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Rachel Paumgardhen



Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405



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CANDICE E NETTELL
Candice E. Nettell

Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405

USA 33



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Candice E. Nettell

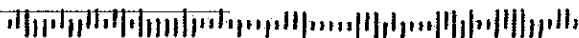
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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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N. Charleston, SC 29405

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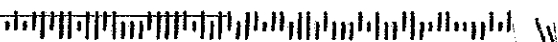
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Ruth Ann Lane
4042 Scotts Hill Cp Rd
Wilmington, NC 28411



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Diane LoSchavo
DIANE LoSchavo



USA 33



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N. Charleston, SC 29405

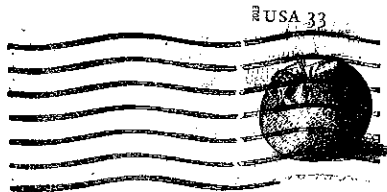
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Frani Wisdo

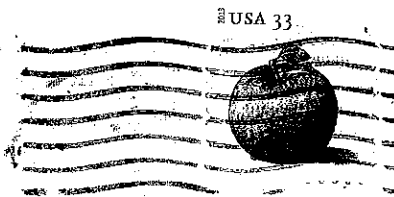


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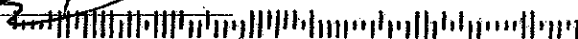


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Michael Treck
3113 NC Hwy 210 W
Haglerstead
Wt 30



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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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N. Charleston, SC 29405

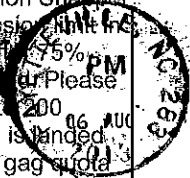
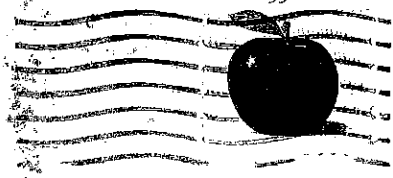


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Shari Vontassel
[Signature]

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USA 33

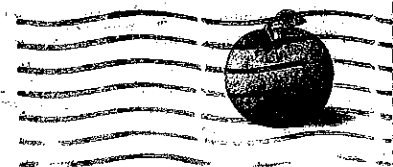


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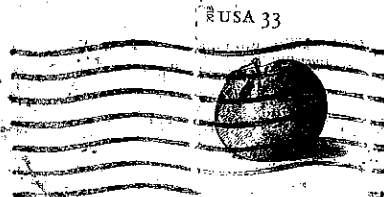
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Barbara Tyner
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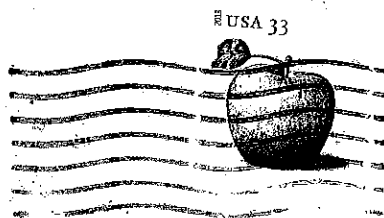


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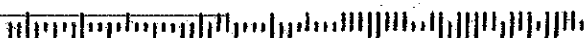


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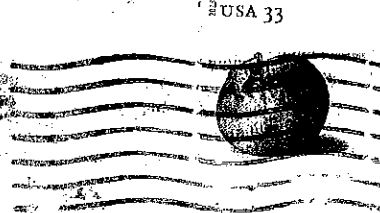
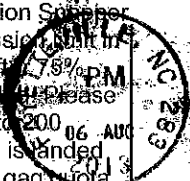


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Order for
Andrea Jacquot



Bob Mahood, Executive Director
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4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405

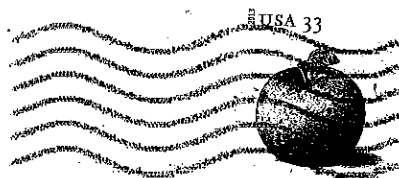


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Chris

COASTAL CAROLINA AREA

283 41
06 AUG 2013 PM



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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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N. Charleston, SC 29405

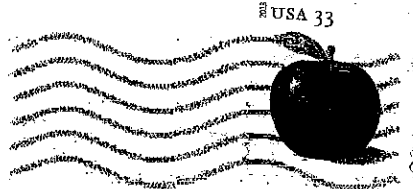


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Carla Bonner

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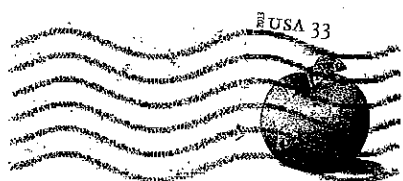
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Michael Taylor

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USA 33



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Madeline L. Benham

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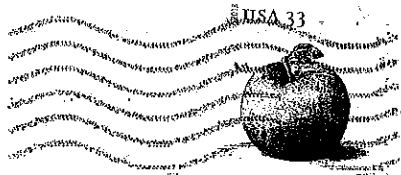
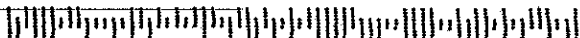
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David Stowe

DAVID STOWE



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Jessica Simmonds
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Brittney Anthony

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Wonderful Work

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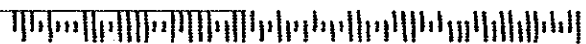


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Bentley Adair

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Yolanda Johnston



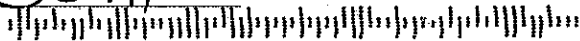
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Dallas Vetter

10300 us Hwy 17

Wilmington NC

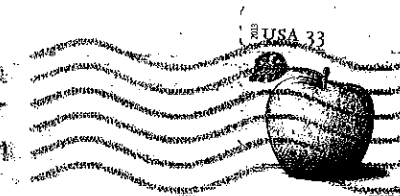
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4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405

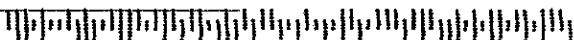


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Nancy L. Knott
Paul M. Holcomb



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Lisa Loesch

P. P.

USA 33



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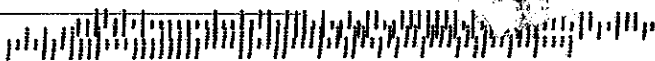
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Glenn Stephen King
[Signature]



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Sara Fusha
[Signature]

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Brian Tassi

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Brian Tassi

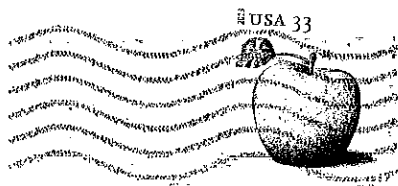
Elizabeth Tassi

Megan Johnston

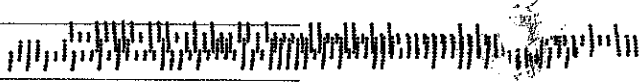
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Sharon Edens Sharon Edens



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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405



Regulatory Amendment 14 Public Comment
Please align opening dates for co-occurring species and manage quotas so everything is legal as we target fish with higher limits.



Quotas in a multi-species fishery should be managed with possession limits that step down as landings increase to avoid long closures that currently result in well over a million pounds of dead discards annually.

From: RICK BARNHARDT [<mailto:zigazag33@hotmail.com>]
Sent: Saturday, June 01, 2013 7:05 AM
To: Kim Iverson
Subject: amendment 14

Regulatory Amendment 14 provides an opportunity to align the BSB opening date with shallow-water grouper to reduce regulatory discards. Please consider sending the SAFMC an email asking them to align the opening dates for co-occurring species.

This is very important to conserving and making the fishing healthier, for instance, when you have beeliners closed down the boats fish the same rocks for triggers, bass, grouper and float off miles of dead beeliners, the more you close the worse it gets, in Jan and Feb it get's down to commercial and a few rec boats on the same rocks fishing for triggers, just to have something to do, putting an incredible pressure on one specie, in the meantime, any and all beeliners, bass, gags, and scamp are dumped overboard floating for miles dead, what we have to do is align the closures and stick to it, pick the best spawning months for the most fish and take 2 or 3 mos of prime spawning and close it all down, then when you reopen it open it all at one time, then you will not have the discards and it will make a big difference on the fish population, it's devastating to watch a mile of dead fish float off for no reason at all, and this is all winter long. we kill more fish during the closures than we do during open season., a total waste.

Hi my name is Vincent Bonura from Goin' Off Enterprises Inc. These are my comments regarding **Amendment 14**. Regarding **Action 1**: Modify the commercial and recreational fishing years for greater amberjack. I do not have any problems with **preferred alternative 2**: Modify the commercial and recreational fishing years for greater amberjack to begin on January 1 and end on December 31. **Action 4**: I do not believe it's a good idea to drop the trip limit on the hook and line fisherman due to the fact that with 100 to 300 lbs of black sea bass they will barely be able to make fuel expense let alone pay bills and support families. **Action 5**: I don't have a problem with the **preferred alternative 1**: no action. **Action 6**: I would agree with **Preferred alternative 2**. Reduce the trip limit when 75% of the gag commercial ACL is met but I prefer **Sub-alternative 2e**. Reduce trip limit to 500 lbs gw. I would say that should be good to at least make it worth while to gag grouper fishing in order to provide for our families.

Tight Lines,
Vincent Bonura

These fish that are so apparently in need of protection cannot have a population less decimated by floating on the top of the ocean wasted entirely than if an angler was allowed to take one home. If there were not useless regulations then you wouldn't have all the regulatory discards. Which in plain everyday English means fish that we are forcing our sportsmen to WASTE!!

A multi-species fishery needs to be managed so everything is legal at the same time as we target fish with higher limits. Since May 1 is the end of a four month closure for shallow-water grouper, that should be the opening date for bottom fish. Most fish like those in RA 14 should have their annual quotas split into two seasons. Most possession limits should start at 1,000 pounds until 75% of a quota is landed, then step down to 100 or 200 pounds so the quota is filled without a long closure. Fish with lower quotas should have lower limits. Red Snapper could have a 1 fish per person by-catch allowance during the shallow-water grouper season instead of allocating half a MILLION pounds of the quota to dead discards every year. A reduced possession limit should not be high enough for fishermen to target that species while allowing us to keep most of those caught accidentally. Reverting back to science-based size limits would also greatly reduce regulatory discards. These common-sense solutions would allow consumers to access 90% of the seafood currently being wasted.

Managers,

I wish to add my say on the proposed changes to the Snapper/ Grouper complex rules.

I have a very large distrust of this council's use of statics and projections and this founded distrust of the SAMFC stems from its gross misuse of the biomass assessment used to shut down our red snapper fishery of the NE Florida coast and all affected coastal waters for 35 years. Under the new proposal of SEDAR 14, the council uses the language of "ACL has been met or is projected to be met." Do we as fisherman really want to fish under this council's "PROJECTIONS"? Do we really want to give King Roy Crabtree and his merry band of likeminded folks this much power to rule over our fishery? As this council is now proposing what would seem better rules; however, knowing your history of taking our fishing away from us (weather its vermillion snapper, black sea bass or amberjack) I doubt is we have made any significant gain because this Council will find a way to 'create' its own statistical model to show *PROJECTED* ACL being threatened and then take our fishery away once again. The council needs to **RESTORE OUR RED SNAPPER FISHERY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!** Maybe this council will be able to restore a little of its creditability the fisherman who you are to serve not to rule over. We, as fisherman, should not be so excited to re-gain what was lost to us and thank this council for giving us back what freedom we did enjoy. We need to find ways to have Roy Crabtree fired and replaced. Those who support him, removed. As fisherman, we need to do more.

As for what these folks wish to grant its citizens:

Amberjack: Alt 2

Black sea bass: Alt 5

Vermillion: Alt 3

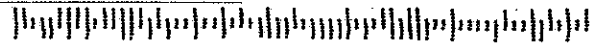
In the immortal words of Capt Jack Sparrow. "Take what you can and give nothing back" words to live by when dealing with King Crabtree and his court.

Rob Darner

Please split the Triggerfish quota into two seasons that open with Vermilion Snapper and put a 1,000 pound possession limit in place with a 200 pound limit after 75% of each seasonal quota is landed. Please reduce the Gag Grouper limit to 200 pounds after 75% of the quota is landed and use the 27,218 pounds of gag quota that was recently allocated to dead discards for a 50 pound by-catch allowance after the primary quota is filled. Other species with extended closures should also be managed this way to avoid total closures. Please open Black Sea Bass with shallow water grouper and reduce the possession limit to 200 pounds after 75% of the quota has been landed. Thank you for considering these solutions.

R. Imael

Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405



After attending the August 7 meeting in Cocoa Beach I feel that Amendment 14 contains some proposal I approve of. Since I use my Snapper/Grouper unlimited permit often some of the proposal will affect me commercially. In action 1 I approve of alternative 2. In action 4 I approve of alternative 3c. In action 5 I approve of alternative 3c. In action 6 I approve of alternative 2a, I feel strongly about alternative 2a because it would keep Gag open the longest. We already have the absurd 4 month political closure, I call it that because no grouper takes 4 months to ACTUALLY SPAWN. Here in East Central Florida they ACTUALLY SPAWN in March and April. They are closed in January and February because they migrate here from Carolinas and the 4 month closure is designed to protect the Gags from being harvested in Florida waters preserving a majority of the resource for the Carolinas.

Thank You for your attention to this matter.

Robert Heater

The Humane Society of the United States Center for Biological Diversity
Whale and Dolphin Conservation

Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405
Submitted Via Email: SGRegAm14Comments@safmc.net

August 14, 2013

Re: Comments on Proposed Amendment 14 Related to Black Sea Bass Seasons

Dear Mr. Mahood,

On behalf of the members and supporters of The Humane Society of the United States, the Center for Biological Diversity and Whale and Dolphin Conservation, I am offering comments on the proposal under Amendment 14 to change the opening and closing dates for the commercial black sea bass trap/pot fishery under Action 4. All four alternatives being considered under this action would permit a year-round black sea bass fishery; however all four alternatives under consideration also recognize that black sea bass pots are prohibited from November 1 through April 30 of each year. This seasonal closure on commercial pot fishing was the result of an important component of proposed Amendment 19, which also altered the allowable catch limits.

We do not necessarily object to adjusting the annual opening or closing dates for the commercial black sea bass fishery, nor do we prefer one option over the others; however, no matter which alternative is chosen, the provision of Amendment 19 that mandates a seasonal closure to the sea bass pot fishery *must remain in effect*. In no case can the fishery be allowed to operate from November 1 through April 30 of each year due to the risk to critically endangered North Atlantic right whales in their seasonal calving habitat in the southeast.

The Black Sea Bass Trap Fishery Poses a Risk to Right Whales

In its proposed rulemaking on Amendment 19, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) acknowledged that “[t]he seasonal sea bass pot prohibition would be a precautionary measure to prevent interactions between black sea bass pot gear and whales during large whale migrations and during the right whale calving season off the U.S. southeastern coast.” [78 FR 39700, July 2, 2013]

Where a cause of death can be determined, over half of all right whale deaths along the Atlantic coast are a result of entanglement in commercial fishing gear (NMFS, 2012). NMFS has found that there is no level of mortality, however low, that can be considered “insignificant” to this imperiled population (Id.). Both trap/pot gear and gillnets are involved in entangling right whales. Though it is not always possible to determine the origin of line entangling whales, where the gear could be identified, rope associated with trap/pot gear was more frequently found on entangled right whales than rope associated with gillnets. (Johnson et al., 2005) NMFS acknowledges in its annual List of Fisheries that the black sea bass pot sector is part of the Category II Atlantic mixed species trap/pot fishery which has caused serious injury or death of marine mammals.

Right Whales Regularly Use the Waters Affected by This Rulemaking

It is well known that right whales travel to, and give birth in, the waters off the southeastern United States, from Florida to at least as far north as Cape Fear, North Carolina (NMFS, 2012). Some, but not all of these waters are within designated critical habitat. In 2007 the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center issued a report to assist in the agency’s consideration of revisions to the boundaries of the southeast right whale critical habitat that included most of these waters. (Garrison, 2007) Based largely on that report, NMFS enacted broad time and area restrictions to protect right whales from entanglement within the seasonal gillnet restricted area. [72 Fed.Reg. 34632, 34636; June 25, 2007] In designating the restricted area, NMFS characterized the waters within this Southeast gillnet restricted area, which extends to the southern border of North Carolina, as a “substantial and core portion of the right whale calving area.” While this area was designated as a means of restricting gillnets, the historically greater likelihood of right whales becoming entangled in trap/pot gear (Johnson et al., 2005), provides imperative to also assure that risk does not increase in this area as a result of increased use of trap/pot gear at a time when right whales are present.

Right whales also use waters further to the north of the restricted area, including calving off North Carolina (Keller et al, 2012; NOAA/NMFS, undated) and NMFS itself acknowledges this broadened area of calving (NMFS, 2012). A prohibition on black bass trap/pot gear from November to April is necessary and prudent to avoid additional entanglement risk.

Conclusion

A seasonal prohibition on the commercial black sea bass trap/pot fishery is essential to assure protection of vulnerable mothers and newborn right whales calves. Regardless of the dates chosen to delineate the black sea bass fishery season, the annual closure from November 1 through April 30 that was enacted as part of Amendment 19 must remain in place.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Sharon Young
Marine Issues Field Director
The Humane Society of the United States
syoung@humanesociety.org



Sarah Uhlemann
Senior Attorney
Center for Biological Diversity
suhlemann@biologicaldiversity.org



Regina A. Asmutis-Silva
Executive Director
Whale and Dolphin Conservation, North America
regina.asmutis-silvia@whales.org

References Cited

Garrison, L.P. 2007. Defining the North Atlantic Right Whale Calving Habitat in the Southeastern United States: An Application of a Habitat Model. NOAA Technical Memorandum NOAA NMFS-SEFSC-553: 66 p

Johnson, A., G. Salvador, J. Kenney, J. Robbins, S. Kraus, S. Landry and P. Clapham. 2005. Fishing gear involved in entanglements of right and humpback whales. *Marine Mammal Science* 21 (4): 635-645. Available at:
http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/injury/pdfs/day2_robbins_johnson.pdf

Keller, C.A., L. Garrison, R. Baumstark, L.I. Ward-Geiger, and E. Hines. 2012 . Application of a habitat model to define calving habitat of the North Atlantic right whale in the southeastern United States.. *Endangered Species Res.*(18): 73–87. Available at: http://www.int-res.com/articles/esr_oa/n018p073.pdf

NMFS 2012. U.S. Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Marine Mammal Stock Assessments –North Atlantic right whale. Available at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/sars/pdf/ao2012.pdf>

NOAA/NMFS, undated. North Atlantic Right Whale Sightings. Searchable database. National Marine Fisheries Service, NEFSC. Available at: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/psb/surveys/>

Hello,

I just wanted to comment on the proposed trip limits for hook & line Black Sea Bass fishermen if the pot fishery is closed because of the hazards to the whales. I sure hope the council will consider a good size limit, I think 300 pounds is the most among the proposals, I wouldn't be opposed to an even larger limit. When the pot fishermen are working the fishing areas the hook & line guys production is greatly reduced.

Thank You,

Allston Ieland

SAFMC Regulatory Amendment 14 Public Comments

I am Chris McCaffity, a commercial fisherman who has been offering simple solutions that would almost eliminate the MILLION+ pounds of dead regulatory discards currently being deducted from our quotas every year. This waste has gone on for years as the council drags its collective feet on solving the problem while rushing unnecessary amendments. This waste helps EDF advance their catch share agenda as they lobby to stack the council deck with supporters of their scheme to privatize our public resources. Fishermen should have final approval of who represents us on the council and any new regulations with a 2/3 majority vote of participating permit holders in the affected fishery. Here is how most fishermen want our fishery managed.

A multi-species fishery needs to be managed so everything is legal at the same time as we target fish with higher limits. Since May 1 is the end of a four month closure for shallow-water grouper, that should be the opening date for bottom fish. Most fish like those in RA 14 should have their annual quotas split into two seasons. Most possession limits should start at 1,000 pounds until 75% of a quota is landed, then step down to 100 or 200 pounds so the quota is filled without a long closure. Fish with lower quotas should have lower limits. Red Snapper could have a 1 fish per person by-catch allowance during the shallow-water grouper season instead of allocating half a MILLION pounds of the quota to dead discards every year. A reduced possession limit should not be high enough for fishermen to target that species while allowing us to keep most of those caught accidentally. Reverting back to science-based size limits would also greatly reduce regulatory discards. These common-sense solutions would allow consumers to access 90% of the seafood currently being wasted.

The Congressional hard deadlines have been met. Now we need to start MANAGING all quotas to avoid extended closures and excessive regulatory discards. If some want to do that through catch shares, then let's have the debate and allow permit holders to decide how we want our quotas managed with a 2/3 majority vote of participating permit holders. The mismanagement of our fishery has gone on for far too long. It seems almost as if the mismanagement has been intentional at times in an attempt to advance agendas like catch shares, sector separation, fleet consolidation, and area closures. Whatever the reason is for this mismanagement, we need to fix the problems NOW.

I will gladly explain this Fishery Management Plan in greater detail to anyone interested and my invitation that has been extended for years to debate any supporter of catch shares still stands. The fact that NOBODY will defend or explain catch shares in a debate is very telling about just how bad a scheme it really is.

Thank you for considering my comments. Please email me if you have any questions or would like to schedule a debate. freefish7@hotmail.com

From: Captpaul1966 <captpaul1966@aol.com>
To: SGReg14comment <SGReg14comment@safmc.net>
Sent: Mon, Aug 5, 2013 3:44 pm
Subject: Comment

My name is Paul Nelson, thankyou for letting me cooment on ammendment 14.

On action 1, I prefer Alt 2 Open Amberjack season on January 1.

On action 2, I prefer Alt 3.

On action 4, I prefer Alt 3, Sub alt 3b

On action 5, I prefer Alt 1

On action 6, I prefer Alt 2, Sub alt 2c

Thankyou,
Captain Paul Nelson

Bloodline Fishing

From: James Newman [<mailto:gaclaims@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, August 07, 2013 3:42 PM
To: Duval, Michelle
Subject: BSB additional Comments

Mam:

I did testify at the hearing at Richmond Hill, Georgia on BSB limits and seasons, but would like to add an idea that I hope will be considered.

The spawn season for the Black Sea Bass should be closed as far as concerned to protect the species during that critical time.

According to the following quote from the SAFMC site:

SAFMC:

"They spawn from **February through October**. Because they are a relatively short-lived species, the population is able to recover more quickly from a depleted condition."

This means that a season that begins in June and runs until the ACL is reached is during that very prime time for the spawn. The heat of the summer may deter many anglers, but a season that runs from November through January seems to me would place less stress on the fishery. A split season would be even better for the small boaters who cannot chase the BSB out to deeper water say **April and May** and then the non-spawn time or **November, December and January**. The close-in reefs would be the target area for those who cannot go out to 100 to 120 feet of water.

They fish primarily in 50 to 70 feet of water and 5 to 15 miles offshore. During that time anglers have migrated to Sheepshead as the species of choice on the very same reefs that are occupied by hordes of BSB, so the by catch is more than during the summer months as the BSB move to deeper waters. They do vacate the close-in reefs when the water temp drops below 55 degrees. So that would slow the rate of catch and release and allow fishermen to target the Sheepshead, but keep a meal of BSB in the process. The idea of first caught-first kept has some merit as well.

Culling of the catch could be a problem but many do that now. It is a matter of trust us if you want our trust in you.

Many of us fish year round and find that we fish more in the cooler spring and fall times, unless the seasons are closed as has been the case for the past couple of years.

It is high time that the ideas of the small boaters who are engaged in light offshore fishing is given weight in the regulatory process! Too long have their vast numbers been ignored. Nobody is looking out for them. The economic impact that we have is far beyond that of the commercial sector and the charter fleet combined, when you consider what we spend on boats, tackle, gear and sundries. These closures have impacted us far more than the other sectors

mentioned above. Many of my fellow anglers have already sold their boats in total disgust with the current direction of the regulation of our angling passion.

Thanks for any consideration that you give these ideas.

Please split the Triggerfish quota into two seasons that open with Vermilion Snapper and put a 1,000 pound possession limit in place with a 200 pound limit after 75% of each seasonal quota is landed. Please reduce the Gag Grouper limit to 200 pounds after 75% of the quota is landed and use the 27,218 pounds of gag quota that was recently allocated to dead discards for a 50 pound by-catch allowance after the primary quota is filled. Other species with extended closures should also be managed this way to avoid total closures. Please open Black Sea Bass with shallow water grouper and reduce the possession limit to 200 pounds after 75% of the quota has been landed. Thank you for considering these solutions.

We support
our local
fisherman.

Dee Dee & Ernie Keller
March Shutter Co.

Thank you for considering these solutions.

Sylvia Hlesson
4081 Choppee Rd
Georgetown, S.C.
29440

Thank you for considering these solutions.

Jackie Forbes
48 Green Bay Dr
Andrews SC
29510

Thank you for considering these solutions.

Wade P. P.

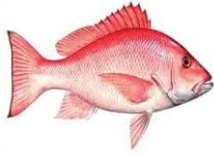
Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
N. Charleston, SC 29405

N. Charleston, SC 29405

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SOUTHEASTERN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION (SFA)



EAST COAST FISHERIES SECTION (ECFS)

Mr. Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405

Date: Sunday August 18, 2013

Re: Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 14 Proposed Seven Actions and SFA ECFS
Preferred Alternatives SGRRegAm14Comments@safmc.net

Mr. Mahood,

The Southeastern Fisheries Association (SFA), East Coast Fisheries Section (ECFS) is submitting written comment concerning the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (SAFMC) proposed actions on Snapper Grouper (SG) fishery management plan (FMP) Regulatory Amendment 14 (RA-14). SFA ECFS preferred alternatives are presented, and comments from SFA ECFS are in "red" under each of the seven actions.

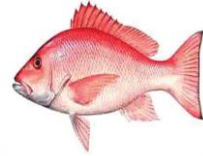
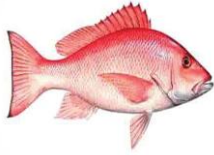
Action 1. Modify the commercial *and recreational* fishing years for greater amberjack

Preferred Alternative 2. Modify the commercial *and recreational* fishing years for greater amberjack to begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

SFA ECFS supports Preferred Alternative 2 for RA-14 Action 1.

SNAPPER GROUPE AP RECOMMENDATION: The AP recommended Alternative 1 (No Action) as a preferred. AP members stated that they felt a year or two should go by to see the effects of current management on the greater amberjack stock. They were concerned that if the fishing year were to change, there could be some fishing pressure during the spawning season in May. AP members did acknowledge that a positive outcome of changing the start of the fishing year to January 1 would be the certainty of being able to catch amberjack early in the year when not many other snapper grouper species are allowed to be harvested.

SOUTHEASTERN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION (SFA)



EAST COAST FISHERIES SECTION (ECFS)

Action 2. Modify the fishing year for the black sea bass recreational sector

Preferred Alternative 3. Modify the recreational fishing year for black sea bass to begin on April 1 and end on March 31.

SFA ECFS supports Preferred Alternative 3 for RA-14 Action 2.

SNAPPER GROUPER AP RECOMMENDATION: The AP recommended a start date of April 1 for the recreational black sea bass fishing year (Alternative 3). The rationale behind their recommendation is to make the start date coincide with the opening of recreational fishing for vermilion snapper and thus minimize the amount of discards.

Action 3. Modify the recreational accountability measure for black sea bass

Alternative 1. (No Action). If the recreational sector black sea bass ACL is met or is projected to be met, independent of stock status, prohibit the harvest and retention of black sea bass. If the recreational sector black sea bass ACL is exceeded, independent of stock status, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the recreational sector ACL in the following season by the amount of the overage. ACL paybacks are not required when new projections are adopted that incorporate ACL overages and the ACLs are adjusted in accordance with those projections.

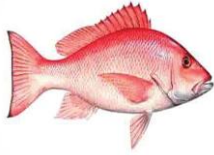
SFA ECFS supports Alternative 1 (No Action) for the RA-14 Action 3.

Action 4. Modify the fishing year for the black sea bass commercial sector

Alternative 3. Modify the commercial fishing year for black sea bass to begin on January 1 and end on December 31. *Black sea bass pots are prohibited from November 1 through April 30.* From May 1 to October 31, the trip limit would be 1,000 lbs gw for pots. From May 1 to December 31, the trip limit would be 1,000 lbs gw weight for the hook-and-line sector and from January 1 to April 30, the hook and line sector would be restricted to a trip limit of: **Sub-alternative 3c.** 300 lbs gw

SFA ECFS supports Alternative 3, Sub-alternative 3c, for the RA-14 Action 4 as the Preferred.

SOUTHEASTERN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION (SFA)



EAST COAST FISHERIES SECTION (ECFS)

SNAPPER GROUPE AP RECOMMENDATION: One AP member recommended keeping the June 1 start date of the commercial fishing year because black sea bass harvest in the Mid-Atlantic is normally closed by then and that creates an exceptionally strong market. The same individual expressed that if commercial harvest for black sea bass were to begin in the Mid-Atlantic and the South Atlantic at the same time, it would be a disaster. The AP engaged in a lengthy discussion on the benefits of a January 1 start date with a bycatch allowance for the hook-and line sector until harvest with pots was open. The main benefit of this approach would be to allow commercial harvest of black sea bass and vermillion snapper at the same time. Also, the trip limit would help commercial fishermen during March and April, when other snapper grouper species are closed. A January 1 fishing year start date would also provide additional data from winter months for stock assessment efforts. The AP ultimately recommended Alternative 3 but with a 100-pound trip limit instead of the 50-pound trip originally proposed. In addition, some AP members stated their desire for the Council to consider separating the commercial ACL between the pot and hook-and-line sectors. The intent would be to avoid market flooding and extend the season.

Action 5. Modify the commercial fishing seasons for vermillion snapper

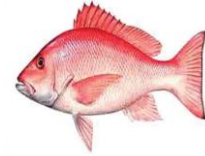
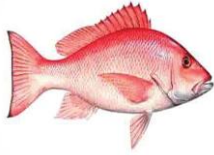
Preferred Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial fishing year for vermillion snapper is split into two seasons of equal duration, each with its own ACL. The first season begins on January 1 and ends on June 30 (6 months). The second season begins on July 1 and ends on December 31 (6 months). The commercial ACL is split equally between the two seasons *with a commercial trip limit for of 1,000 lbs gw (1,110 lbs ww). When 75% of the commercial vermillion snapper ACL has been met or is projected to be met, the commercial trip limit is reduced to 500 lbs gw (555 lbs ww).*

SFA ECFS supports Preferred Alternative 1 (No Action) for RA-14 Action 5.

ABC/ACLs and commercial split season ACLs using the current fishing season for 2013-2016 based on the recent SEDAR assessment and the South Atlantic Council/SSC approved ABC control rule.

Year	ABC ww	Total ACL ww	Comm ACL ww	Comm ACL Jan-June ww	Comm ACL July-Dec ww
2013	1,372,000	1,372,000	932,960	466,480	466,480
2014	1,312,000	1,312,000	892,160	446,080	446,080
2015	1,289,000	1,289,000	876,520	438,260	438,260
2016	1,269,000	1,269,000	862,920	431,460	431,460

SOUTHEASTERN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION (SFA)



EAST COAST FISHERIES SECTION (ECFS)

Action 6. Modify the trip limit for the commercial sector for gag

Preferred Alternative 2. Reduce the trip limit when 75% of the gag commercial ACL is landed.

Preferred Sub-alternative 2c. Reduce the trip limit to 300 lbs gw

SFA ECFS supports the Preferred Alternative 2, Preferred Sub-alternative 2c, for the RA-14 Action 6.

SNAPPER GROUPE AP RECOMMENDATION: The Snapper Grouper AP recommended that the commercial trip limit for gag be reduced to 300 pounds once 75% of the ACL is met or projected to be met (Sub-alternative 2c). The alternative was initially included under this action based on a recommendation from the AP. The intent of their recommendation was to allow for a longer season and minimize the amount of discards when fishermen target other shallow water grouper species.

Action 7. Modify the recreational accountability measure for vermilion snapper

Preferred Alternative 4. If recreational landings, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the recreational ACL, the AA will file a notification to close the recreational fishery for the remainder of the fishing year. Payback of a recreational overage would only take place if vermilion snapper are overfished and the Total ACL is exceeded *due to an overage in the recreational ACL. The amount of the overage would be deducted from the following year's recreational ACL.*

NOTE: Italicized text denotes suggested changes that have not yet been approved by the Council.

SFA ECFS supports Preferred Alternative 4 for the RA-14 Action 7.

SNAPPER GROUPE AP RECOMMENDATION: The AP recommended Alternative 4 as the preferred. The AP reasoned that Alternative 4 would provide ample protection for the stock at this time, given the fluctuating numbers, but yet will not cause undue harm. That is, Alternative 4 meets the intent of Alternative 3 and provides a safety net with the payback provision.

Jimmy Hull, Chairman, SFA ECFS
jgh/rhh

I am Chris McCaffity, a commercial fisherman who has been offering simple solutions that would almost eliminate the MILLION+ pounds of dead regulatory discards currently being deducted from our quotas every year.

This waste has gone on for years as the council drags its collective feet on solving the problem while rushing unnecessary amendments. This waste helps EDF advance their catch share agenda as they lobby to stack the council deck with supporters of their scheme to privative our public resources. Fishermen should have final approval of who represents us on the council and any new regulations with a 2/3 majority vote of participating permit holders in the affected fishery. Here is how most fishermen want our fishery managed.

A multi-species fishery needs to be managed so everything is legal at the same time as we target fish with higher limits. Since May 1 is the end of a four month closure for shallow-water grouper, that should be the opening date for bottom fish. Most fish like those in RA 14 should have their annual quotas split into two seasons. Most possession limits should start at 1,000 pounds until 75% of a quota is landed, then step down to 100 or 200 pounds so the quota is filled without a long closure. Fish with lower quotas should have lower limits. Red Snapper could have a 1 fish per person by-catch allowance during the shallow-water grouper season instead of allocating half a MILLION pounds of the quota to dead discards every year. A reduced possession limit should not be high enough for fishermen to target that species while allowing us to keep most of those caught accidentally. Reverting back to science-based size limits would also greatly reduce regulatory discards. These common-sense solutions would allow consumers to access 90% of the seafood currently being wasted.

The Congressional hard deadlines have been met. Now we need to start MANAGING all quotas to avoid extended closures and excessive regulatory discards. If some want to do that through catch shares, then let's have the debate and allow permit holders to decide how we want our quotas managed with a 2/3 majority vote of participating permit holders. The mismanagement of our fishery has gone on for far too long. It seems almost as if the mismanagement has been intentional at times in an attempt to advance agendas like catch shares, sector separation, fleet consolidation, and area closures. Whatever the reason is for this mismanagement, we need to fix the problems NOW.

I will gladly explain this Fishery Management Plan in greater detail to anyone interested and my invitation that has been extended for years to debate any supporter of catch shares still stands. The fact that NOBODY will defend or explain catch shares in a debate is very telling about just how bad a scheme it really is.

Thank you for considering my comments. Please email me if you have any questions or would like to schedule a debate. freefish7@hotmail.com

Myra,

I would like to submit my comments on Regulatory Amendment 14 Action 4: Modify the Fishing Year for the Black Sea Bass Commercial Sector.

I was the cooperating fisherman on a CRP on fecundity of BSB with Nikolai Kabrinski from the University of North Carolina Wilmington. I was under the impression that spawning of BSB took place mostly in March and April and was winding down in May. I contacted Nikolai recently and asked him about this. He went back and looked and said no the spawning took place in April and May. (This study was done for 2 consecutive years in Onslow Bay, NC. 15 to 25 miles from New River inlet which half way between Cape Fear and Cape lookout). I realized that May is an important month for spawning [50%] and could be very important if we have a late spring and things are pushed back also the hook and line fisherman should have a lot of fish left to work on after the October 31st closure for pots. Lets see how things go for a season or two with this increase in the ACL. For these reasons I support ALTERNATIVE 1: NO ACTION UNDER ACTION 4: MODIFY THE FISHING YEAR FOR THE BLACK SEA BASS COMMERCIAL SECTOR.

Thank you for considering my comments.
Tom Burgess